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# Hill panel says leaks to author damaging

By Bill Gertz  
THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Classified intelligence reported in Bob Woodward's book "Veil" were of "utmost concern" to the CIA and prompted a lengthy internal investigation, according to a House Intelligence subcommittee report released yesterday.

The investigation concluded that present and former CIA officials provided classified information to the author, and it highlighted the failure of intelligence agencies to address security problems, the report said.

The subcommittee labeled this failure "inexcusable" in light of the spate of espionage cases over the past decade.

In its 19-page report on counterintelligence and security, the House Intelligence subcommittee on oversight and evaluation said: "One area of particular interest to the subcommittee was the disclosures made last year in the publication of the book 'Veil' by Washington Post reporter Bob Woodward."

According to the report, CIA officials concluded after their internal investigation that "while no hard evidence has surfaced pointing to a particular suspect, reasoned speculation indicates current and former agency employees may have been the purveyors of classified information to Woodward."

The report further stated: "Agency officials initially told the subcommittee that these leaks were of utmost concern, and they admitted their frustration that 'to date, we have not devised a way to deal with people who have violated the trust reposed in them.'"

U.S. intelligence officials have said the Woodward book contained top secret details about U.S. covert operations, including ultra-secret underwater and space-based eavesdropping missions, paramilitary programs and human agent activities.

One source close to the Intelligence Committee said yesterday the agency's internal probe lasted a year and found the leaks to Mr. Woodward extremely damaging to the CIA and U.S. intelligence operations.

"Some members felt that, all things considered, the CIA didn't vigorously address the problem," the source said. "This particularly held true of some of the more prominent members of the organization."

The subcommittee report also concluded that:

- Efforts to improve personnel security in intelligence agencies "have suffered from a lack of serious attention."

- Continued emphasis on pre-employment background investigations is "misplaced" since clearances are rarely denied and re-evaluation of cleared personnel "requires increased attention."

- Strict adoption of the "need-to-know" principle of who should have access to secrets is "lax," resulting in "casual exchange of information and unnecessary access."

- Personnel security programs should focus more on former employees who have access to secrets since "many agencies have no existing programs to address this important area."

Subcommittee chairman Rep. Anthony Beilenson, California Democrat, said of the report: "Although we have known for several years now that serious weaknesses in our personnel security system are at the heart of our espionage crisis, we have failed to make important changes that could significantly improve our ability to identify and catch spies."

In a separate section, five Republican committee members stated that the committee's hearings, which led to the report, "touched only lightly" on leaks of classified information which they said were "rampant and cause enormous damage to U.S. intelligence collection, intelligence liaison relationships and U.S. policy interests."

They said "scores" of intelligence leaks pertaining to CIA work were identified in 1987.

"We became convinced that even the CIA has displayed a profound lack of interest in policing its own demonstrated problems, especially when these involve prominent officials," the Republicans stated.

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